

Solid Waste Advisory Committee

August 19, 2008; 4:00PM
General Services Department
Combined Operations and Maintenance Facility
311 North State Street

Meeting Minutes

The meeting was convened at 4:10 PM in the Conference Room at the General Services Department Combined Operations and Maintenance Facility.

Present: Councilor Keith Nyhan, Chair, Councilor Liz Blanchard, Councilor Fred Keach, Councilor Dick Lemieux, Councilor Bill Stetson

Staff: Chip Chesley, Pat Winn, Carlos Baia, Jim Howard (part time)

Guest: Ted Siegler, DSM Environmental

The meeting was convened at 4:10 PM by Councilor Nyhan.

General

Councilor Nyhan noted this is the first meeting of the newly constituted Solid Waste Advisory Committee. He reviewed that committee's organization which includes six councilors and eight residents, and advised that he anticipates the remaining open appointments to be presented at the September City Council meeting. He suggested that it may be easier for those commuting from work to convene future meetings at 4:15 PM and would like to keep meetings to an hour and half, if practical.

Pay As You Throw Presentation and Update

Chip noted this is the first item on the agenda which is part of the work that staff is pursuing as it relates to the Solid Waste Master Plan completed by DSM Environmental. The City is facing several issues that will impact solid waste management in the immediate future; (1) a substantial increase in the tip fee charged by Wheelabrator Technologies that will adversely impact both revenues and expenses in the FY 10 budget, and (2) the elimination of the ability to dispose leaf and yard waste at the Penacook Waste to Energy Facility effective June 30, 2009, that could also adversely impact the FY 10 budget. A briefing paper prepared by DSM Environmental was distributed to the committee and those in attendance (copy attached).

Councilor Blanchard inquired about the status of the City's composting efforts. Chip briefed the committee on the ongoing pilot program where the City has an

agreement with a private vendor to perform composting and distribute the finished product, and noted that the City will not be able to collect leaf and yard waste that is commingled with solid waste for disposal at the incinerator after June 30, 2009. Councilor Nyhan suggested that the City look at three options:

1. City forces collect and compost leaf and yard waste
2. Contract forces collect and compost leaf and yard waste
3. Provide a location at the transfer station for residents to drop off leaf and yard waste for subsequent composting

Councilor Keach inquired about Pay-as-You-Throw for multi-family housing. Chip noted that Concord is unique in New Hampshire in that the City provides collection service to multi-family housing (properties with more than eight units). Multi-family properties with less than eight units per parcel utilize the City's curbside program. Ted noted it would typically be the renters responsibility to purchase the bag; not the landlord. Relative to multi-family with more than eight units that are serviced by dumpsters, Ted noted that it is probably most practical to charge multi-family properties based upon the size and number of dumpsters rather than require residents utilize a bag, and to offer single stream recycling at no cost. In this manner, residents in multi-family units would receive a very similar level of service to those who can now recycle through the City's existing curbside program. With curbside collection, it is easy for the solid waste collector to distinguish PAYT bags from typical bags and not service those households who do not use a PAYT bag. It is easier for residents to avoid the system by placing a non-PAYT bag in a dumpster where it is commingled with other PAYT bags. Ted shared with the committee Brockton's experience in that the City took an aggressive position early in the program through its Code office. Carlos inquired as to staffing effort; Ted noted that the additional staffing requirement was programmed into the PAYT effort. Chip shared with the committee that Pat had visited the multifamily properties currently served by the City to determine if there were any obstacles to provide single stream containers. Pat reported on a program initiated by the Oakbrook Condominium Association where they have agreed to pay for single stream recycling. Prior to recycling, Oakbrook utilized 6 ten yard containers. They now have 3 eight yard containers for single stream recycling and 3 ten yard containers for solid waste.

Ted reviewed some points contained in his briefing paper. With continued increasing costs to manage solid waste, communities throughout the country are looking at Pay-As-You-Throw to help financial support the cost of this service. In New Hampshire, there are currently 38 municipalities with unit based pricing. Reasons cited by these municipalities include:

1. It generates another source of revenues
2. Creates equity; residents pay for what they use
3. Creates an incentive to reduce waste, and
4. Controls waste leaking into your collection system from other sources

He noted there are two ways a community may approach PAYT or unit based pricing:

1. For those communities where solid waste collection is provided through private subscription service, require vendors, through ordinance and licensing, to set their fees based upon volume. In these instances, vendors typically set a fee based upon a set of standard size containers and number of containers serviced per household. He noted the City of Keene manages their solid waste in this fashion.
2. For communities where solid waste collection is provided through a single collector by either municipal forces, or a contractor hired through a multi-year contractor by the municipality, require residents to purchase bags or stickers to generate revenues. He advised that bags were preferential to stickers since stickers may fall off and may be counterfeited.

He advised that it is generally more cost effective from the resident's perspective to have a single solid waste collector serve a particular community since it eliminates several trucks performing similar routes with a subscription service. Concord provides solid waste collection with a single collector.

He noted that it generally costs about 10 to 15 cents to manufacture and distribute bags to the market place, and there are readily established vendors who are successfully providing this service to communities. The bag's thickness helps to self regulate residents' attempts to overfill them. Ted noted those residents who currently receive financial assistance for utilities would also qualify for financial assistance for solid waste disposal. Most systems have two size bags; a 33 gallon bag and a smaller one. He noted Lancaster has three sizes. He shared that his firm had surveyed eight communities with curbside PAYT programs. The cost for a 33 gallon bag ranged from \$ 1.50 to \$ 2.00; none of the communities reported a problem with illegal dumping.

Councilor Nyhan inquired about a modified PAYT program where the resident may receive a certain number of bags at no cost. Ted noted that may be a good way to start a program; however, it provides less incentive to recycle.

Councilor Blanchard inquired about mandatory recycling. Ted noted there are a number of municipalities with mandatory recycling with a broad range of enforcement and subsequent results. He noted PAYT programs with single stream recycling will have similar results as mandatory programs with strict compliance. He noted there is sometimes a challenge in this area since the individual charge to collect the waste at the curb may be reluctant to not collect a non-compliant container of waste.

Carlos inquired about the enforcement effort in Brockton. Ted reported that Brockton recognized this as an additional effort and budgeted for additional effort during the transition.

Councilor Blanchard inquired about the effectiveness of increase educational efforts. Ted noted that a strong educational effort may realize a ten percent increase in recycling volumes; however, it is necessary to sustain the educational effort at an aggressive level; otherwise, the increase in recycling will generally tail off.

Chip provided the committee with the results of a financial assessment based upon pricing the bag at \$ 2.00, providing weekly curbside recycling, providing single stream recycling to the multi-family program and a paper leaf and yard waste collection program. The assessment showed the level of the general fund transfer required over the next six years for a PAYT program, and one supported without a PAYT program. Councilor Keach noted there is an economic problem.

Councilor Nyhan appreciated the overview. At the next meeting, the committee will review the schedule to consider changes to the solid waste program, and a proposal to eliminate leaf and yard waste collection. He then suggested to take three items up on the agenda that may require Committee action:

1. Annette Zamarchi referral from City Council regarding CFC bulbs
2. Centerpoint Church Request for Solid Waste Fee Adjustment
3. Capitol Commons Request for Solid Waste Fee Adjustment

Annette Zamarchi Referral from City Council regarding CFC bulbs

Concord City Council received a copy an e-mail from Ms. Annette Zamarchi regarding the City Transfer Station only accepting up to three CFC bulbs at a time for no charge from Concord residents (copy attached).

Pat advised that he had met with the vendor and successfully negotiated increasing the limit to six CFC bulbs to be disposed at a single visit at no charge which is consistent with the practice of several stores in the area. Pat also advised that he had shared this with Ms. Zamarchi.

The Committee thanked Pat for his efforts and encouraged him to share with Concord residents other outlets that may be available to them for disposal of CFC bulb.

Centerpoint Baptist Church Request for Solid Waste Fee Adjustment

Concord City Council received correspondence from Centerpoint Church requesting financial relief of the current charge they are incurring as a property located within the Downtown Solid Waste District noting that the volume of their solid waste has diminished since the relocation of the school off their property (copy attached).

Councilor Nyhan noted it appears that there are two reasons in their correspondence that they are seeking relief:

1. That they are the only church paying for solid waste services, and
2. They would be amenable to a charge that more accurately reflects their demand.

Pat noted that Mrs. Grace Taylor, the church's Operation Coordinator, had called earlier today regarding the status of their request and advised her that the committee is meeting today.

Chip briefed the committee on the formation of the Downtown Solid Waste District and the service that it receives. Jim Howard recalled that solid waste collection service was of a poorer quality prior to the formation of the District.

The committee inquired if churches are provided service. Pat advised, by ordinance, they are not to receive service since it the service is for residential properties. He noted that both small businesses and churches may have historically used the service, but GSD has recently undertaken an initiative to remove those users from the service. Several committee members did recall GSD efforts on this.

The committee agreed to carry over this discussion to the next Solid Waste Advisory Committee meeting.

Capitol Commons Request for Solid Waste Fee Adjustment

The City had received a letter from Capitol Commons LLC requesting an adjustment for solid waste fees for the period they were not aware of such fees being encumbered. A copy of the letter is attached.

Chip noted that it was his understanding that the Solid Waste Advisory Committee does not have the authority to waive fees but may want to make a recommendation to City Council.

The Committee discussed the facts surrounding the matter as outlined in the correspondence from Capitol Commons, LLC, and unanimously concluded that a fee adjustment is not warranted. Councilor Nyhan requested staff to prepare a response to Capitol Commons advising of their recommendation.

Councilor Nyhan then returned to the remaining items on the agenda.

Downtown Solid Waste District Recycling Project Update

Pat noted that Bestway has removed the six cardboard recycling containers in the Downtown Solid Waste District and replaced them with nine single stream

recycling containers increasing recycling capacity by 30 % at no additional cost. There has been effectively no contamination of recycling material; GSD is currently assessing the effect on diversion.

Transfer Station Operations

Chip reported that the City has a multi-year contract with Bestway to operate the City's transfer station which provides service to the City and is available to the other members of the Concord Co-operative. Except for the \$ 15,000 in revenues it receives from automotive registrations waste surcharge to handle these wastes, the Transfer Station is fully supported by the fees it collects. The agreement with the vendor provides an opportunity to adjust fees annually. For the past two years, it was not necessary to adjust fees; however, with the recent increases in fuel costs, the City has agreed to increase fees about 8 % for out of town generated solid waste. Pat has successfully negotiated with Bestway to add services at the transfer station including thermostats, thermometers, CFC bulbs, and book recycling.

Concord Co-op

Chip reported that the Concord Co-op's Joint Board, of which Concord is a member, will be meeting this Thursday, August 21, to receive an update on the Co-op's effort to develop a single stream recycling facility to serve its member communities and others. Concord and Franklin are potential sites for the facility.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM. The members tentatively agreed to have the next meeting on Tuesday, September 23, at 4:15, at the COMF.